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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography presents information related to content standards for adult learners of English as a Second Language (ESL), suggesting documents that adult ESL professionals can consult as they peruse the issues of standards and accountability in adult ESL education. The bibliography defines content standards as what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction. Some documents may include performance standards, or statements of what learners need to do to demonstrate proficiency in a content standard. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (SM)

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CONTENT STANDARDS FOR ADULT ESL

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Issues of standards and accountability are currently of great importance in education at all levels and in all contexts, including adult English as a second language (ESL). This annotated bibliography suggests some documents that adult ESL professionals can consult as they pursue these issues.

In this bibliography, *content standards* is defined as "what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction" (*The ESL Content Standards for K-12 ESL Students*, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages [TESOL], 1998, p. 15). Some documents may include *performance standards*, or statements of what learners need to do to demonstrate proficiency in a content standard.

Arizona Department of Education. (2000). *Arizona adult education standards*. Phoenix, AZ: Author. Available: www.ade.state.az.us/adult-ed/standardsproj

This document presents statewide standards for adult education programs. Sections for adult ESL and citizenship instruction offer both content and performance standards for five proficiency levels. Each standard includes a statement; performance indicators for reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language functions; and supporting grammar. The ESL section has sample activities and a glossary.

California Department of Education, Adult Education Unit. (1992). *English-as-a-second language model standards for adult education programs*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Available: www.otan.dni.us/webfarm/emailproject/standard.pdf

California's standards for adult ESL has three sections: (1) separate program, curriculum, instruction, and student assessment standards with accompanying examples; (2) descriptions and exit criteria for seven levels of English proficiency (beginning literacy to advanced); and (3) standards for ESL testing and a bibliography of tests and testing references.

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. (2002). Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Author. Available: www.language.ca

The Canadian Language Benchmarks are nationally established communicative proficiency standards for adult ESL, which address reading, writing, listening, and speaking standards at 12 proficiency levels plus the literacy level. Each benchmark is defined and supported by selected competencies and sample tasks. The Web site provides access to full-text versions of the two benchmarks documents, information on Centre activities, related publications, and information on the national assessment effort connected to the Benchmarks project.

Florida Department of Education. (2001). *Curriculum framework: English for limited English proficient adults*. Tallahassee, FL: Author. Available: www.firn.edu/doe/dwdframe/ad/pdf/3201030a.pdf

The adult ESL standards for Florida describe skills for workplace, life, and academic contexts at six proficiency levels (literacy to advanced). A summary of the general standards for each level is offered first, with specific performance indicators for each standard provided in the following section.

Grognet, A. G. (1997). *Performance-based curricula and outcomes: The mainstream English language training project (MELT) updated for the 1990s and beyond*. Denver, CO: Spring Institute for International Studies. Available: www.springinstitute.com/elt/pdf/melt.txt

The original MELT project (1980s) established standards for adult refugee English language training programs funded by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. It included a competency-based curriculum and a set of student performance levels (SPLs) in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This updated document incorporates new points of language learning and instruction. The revised core curriculum focuses on competencies and topics for the three most common proficiency levels of refugees (pre- or non-literate, beginning, and intermediate). The revised SPLs focus on oral communication and listening and establish performance standards for proficiency levels equal to levels 0-5 of the original SPLs.

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Massachusetts Department of Education. (1999). *Framework for adult ESOL in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.* Available: www.doe.mass.edu/acls/curriculum_frameworks.htm

The framework begins with the principles that guided this statewide effort and describes the primary components of the document: five strands (specific areas of learning and instruction that relate to all learners' needs, skill levels, or goals) and learning standards for each strand. Examples of performance indicators for each standard are included. Case-study-like learner profiles, anecdotal vignettes from practitioners, and five essays on topics that cut across strands and standards provide additional context.

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). (1999). Standards-based education. [Special issue]. *Focus on Basics, 3*(C). Available: http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ncsall/fob/1999/fobv3ic.htm

This issue addresses standards-based education and efforts to create and implement standards-based instruction. While none focus specifically on adult ESL, they do offer a variety of perspectives on the topic and provide definitions and clarifications of some of the terms and concepts involved.

New York State Education Department. (1997). *Adult education resource guide and learning standards.* Albany, NY: Author. Available: www.hudrivctr.org/adedres.pdf

This document presents nine broad standards (goals) with accompanying objectives and supporting performance task examples. A section on goals and standards for ESL instruction is included. Descriptions of exit criteria or competencies for three proficiency levels and suggestions of content areas and contexts in which the standards can be incorporated are provided to help practitioners contextualize the standards as they develop curricula and assessment plans.

Stein, S. (2000). *Equipped for the Future (EFF) content standards: What adults need to know and be able to do in the 21st century.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. Available: www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/standards_guide.pdf

This publication documents the development of EFF, a national effort to establish content standards for adult education. Sixteen standards define the knowledge and skills adults need in three areas: worker, citizen/community member, and parent/family member. Also provided are insights from field research on using the standards and a discussion of standards-based education reform.

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2000). *Statewide adult and family literacy competencies and assessment system.* Olympia, WA: Author. Available: www.sbctc.ctc.edu/Board/Educ/ABE/assess.htm

This Web page provides links to the skills competencies for adult basic, ESL, and family literacy education for Washington. ESL standards are framed as exit criteria in listening, speaking, reading, and writing for each of the six levels established by the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS). Also available are performance tasks relating to the standards and rubrics by which to measure them.

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